**RES-831 Problem Space Identification & Reflection**

**Part 1 -Key Points Table**

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| **Key Point** | **Potential Topic Key Point Description** |
| **Background to the Problem** | |
| 1. Describe what is already understood about the problem. 2. Present findings from prior research related to the history of the problem space. 3. Focus on:    1. When the problem started    2. What has been discovered about the problem    3. The current state of the problem 4. Support information with empirical citations | **Background to the Problem**  The link between child environment and academic achievement has been a subject of interest in education, psychology, and social work. In the past, concerns about environmental inequity in education were raised in the middle of the 20th century; for example, the Coleman Report (1966) revealed that students’ achievement depends on socioeconomic and school characteristics (Özer & Suna, 2022). Since then, numerous studies have been conducted to establish the role of Socioeconomic status (SES), school climate, parental involvement, and community safety on the students.  **When the Problem Started**  The focus on educational equity began in the 1960s with several studies exploring equity concerns in terms of resource allocation, school quality, and home environments. Coleman Report (1966) was another study that shifted the focus from the school environment to SES and school resources as the determinants of students’ performance, not internal school factors (Özer & Suna, 2022).  **What Has Been Discovered About the Problem**  Further studies have supported the finding that SES is a significant determinant of academic performance, with children in low-income families having few resources, high stress, and less parental involvement (Walker et al., 2021). Moreover, school climate and teacher-student relationships have also been found to impact student achievement, with positive teacher-student relationships and safe learning environments being critical to student engagement (Perkins et al., 2022). Community and neighborhood safety have also been identified to affect emotional health and cognitive concentration, which is why stability is paramount for learning.  **The Current State of the Problem**  However, educational disparities are still present because of the continued socioeconomic inequality, the fluctuating school climate, and the differences in community support. The COVID-19 pandemic limited access to technology and only compounded these disparities, particularly for students from low-SES homes. Therefore, Recent research is directing more efforts toward the multiple settings encompassing home, school, and community to address such issues (Walker et al., 2021). |
| **Problem Space** | |
| 1. In 3-5 bullets, describe what still needs to be understood related to the topic from empirical literature or research. 2. Use empirical literature dated primarily within the past 5 years. 3. Identify and support what still needs to be understood regarding the problem space through a combination of arguments that justify the problem space:    1. Professional and/or broader societal need identified in the literature    2. Directions for future research based on limitations, recommendations, and/or conflicting findings    3. Synthesis of broader topics to study in combination | * **Interaction Between Socioeconomic and School Climate Factors**   As a result, research has yet to comprehensively understand how socioeconomic factors moderate school climate effects on student outcomes. For instance, although SES has been related to academic performance, the role of school contexts and teacher support still needs to be determined. Such knowledge might inform the development of strategies to reduce SES-related disparities (Walker et al., 2021).   * **Role of Teacher-Student Relationships in Disadvantaged Contexts**   While it is widely understood that teacher-student relationships affect students' academic performance, the effects of such relationships on students in disadvantaged or high-risk settings have yet to be well explored. Research should also focus on how these relationships may act as a protective factor against the negative effects of the environment and enhance the experiences of at-risk learners (Perkins et al., 2022).   * **Long-Term Impacts of Community Safety on Learning**   Although research emphasizes the short-term effects of safety in neighborhoods on cognitive and emotional functioning, the chronic effects on academic achievement and persistence still need to be understood. This knowledge could help develop other community-based educational initiatives (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020).   * **Integrative Role of Parental Involvement and Community Resources**   The relationship between parental involvement and the availability of community resources such as after-school activities has yet to be explored adequately. Such research should address how these multiple factors promote resilience in children from low SES backgrounds, especially in disadvantaged contexts (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). |
| **Review of Literature Topics/Themes** | |
| 1. Identify 3-5 major topics in the literature related to the proposed problem space 2. Each bullet should include:    1. 1-2 sentences defining/describing each topic    2. At least 3 empirical sources supporting each topic | * **Socioeconomic Status and Academic Outcomes**   Socioeconomic status (SES) affects academic performance because it determines the amount of resources, stress, and parents’ engagement. Low SES children are disadvantaged because they face hindrances that inhibit their learning potential and brain development. However, it is crucial to understand that these factors are the main drivers of the goal of providing equal education to every child.  **References**   1. Munir, J., Faiza, M., Jamal, B., Daud, S., & Iqbal, K. (2023). The following are the findings of the study: Effect of Socio-economic Status on Academic Achievement. Journal of Social Sciences Review, 3(2), 695-705. 2. Tahir, T., Ishfaq, U., Begum, S., & Sharjeel, M. (2021). Socio-economic status of parents as a factor influencing the academic performance of the student. Elementary Education Online, 20(5), 2063-2070. 3. Walker, P. R., Johnson, J. K., & Smith, D. L. (2021). The relationship between socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A review of the literature. Journal of Educational Psychology, 113(4), 450-463.  * **School Climate and Teacher-Student Relationships**   A positive school climate, which refers to an environment that is safe, inclusive, and where teachers and students have positive interactions, has a positive impact on the learning process and students' achievement. Teacher-student relationships play a unique role in determining the students' attitudes, motivation, and perseverance.  **References**   1. Chang, C. F., & Hall, N. C. (2022). Differentiating teachers’ social goals: Potential effects on teacher-student interactions and perceptions of classroom interest. AERA Open, 8, 23328584211064916. 2. Civitillo, S., Göbel, K., Preusche, Z., & Jugert, P. (2021). Disentangling the effects of perceived personal and group ethnic discrimination among secondary school students: Teacher-student relationship quality and school climate as protective factors. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2021(177), 77-99. 3. Perkins, L., Robinson, T. A., & Lee, C. M. (2022). Teacher-student relationships and student academic success: The moderating role of school climate. Learning and Individual Differences, pp. 94, 101–110.  * **Parental Involvement in Education**   Parental involvement includes activities like proactive homework assistance, attending parent-teacher meetings, and providing support in the home environment. This engagement is associated with higher academic achievement, increased attendance, and desirable behavioral changes in children.  **References**   1. Eden, C. A., Chisom, O. N., & Adeniyi, I. S. (2024). Parent and community involvement in education: enhancing collaboration for social change. International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences, 6(3), 372-382. 2. Gumapac, J. R., Aytona, E. M., & Alba, M. G. R. (2021). The role of parents in completing students' learning tasks in the new normal. International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management, 4(7), 367-380. 3. Sujarwo, S., Kusumawardani, E., Prasetyo, I., & Herwin, H. (2021). Parent Involvement in Adolescents' Education: A Case Study of Partnership Models. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, *16*(4), 1563-1581. |
| **Problem Statement** | |
| 1. State the specific problem for research with a single clear declarative statement starting with “It is not known…” 2. Alignment: The problem statement must align with the established problem space as described above. | It is not known how these socioeconomic status, school, and community characteristics influence children’s academic performance and how these gaps can be addressed through interventions. |

**Part 2 - Written Reflection**

From previous courses, the area of interest for my research has transformed from a general interest in education disparities to a specific area of interest relating to the effects of socioeconomic status, school environment, and community safety on students’ performance. At first, I was concerned with overall educational disparities, yet once I began to read, I recognized it would be far more insightful to focus on specified aspects, such as the dynamic between the teacher and student or parents’ engagement. Also, the latest works emphasizing the significance of the long-term effects of community safety inspired me to consider this factor in my work. This progression suggests an improvement in the research direction and approach towards a more specific and efficient one.

Recent studies and literature have helped define the scope of my problem statement. The emphasis is on identifying the relationship between SES, school climate, community safety, and academic performance. The study specifically seeks to identify and implement specific intervention strategies regarding protective school environments and preventing negative SES impacts. This refined focus is in line with the current literature, such as the study by Walker et al. (2021) and Perkins et al. (2022), and addresses the need for more research on the interplay of these variables.

My study may help build a comprehensive picture of these factors. While previous research examines the impact of each of these components individually, this research will examine the impact of all of them simultaneously, giving a more accurate picture of how they affect academic performance. In addition, the study could assist in finding out the best strategies for increasing students’ performance in low-performing schools and possibly the best ways of organizing education for diverse learners.

This research has several practical implications. In my profession, the study could assist in designing professional development interventions that enhance educators’ understanding of school climate and student achievement. The findings may be helpful in the broader community of practitioners who use the information to direct their resources and policy changes to ensure that schools in disadvantaged areas have the necessary support to foster safe and stimulating environments. Personally, this research has helped me to learn more about systematic injustice and enabled me to make a change and advocate for policies that would make education accessible to all. This journey has enhanced my academic learning and deepened my commitment to advocating educational change.

**References**

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